

THE

Theatre Workshop **Coulsdon**

CHANGELING

The gripping, darkly comic masterpiece of Jacobean theatre

Lust

Power

Obsession

Murder

Madness

Revenge



At 8pm at Coulsdon Community Centre, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, CR5 3BE



Saturday 24 March, Sunday 25 March, Wednesday 28 March,
Thursday 29 March, Friday 30 March, Saturday 31 March.

Box Office: **07709 266728** - Adults £9.00, Concessions £6.00
or buy tickets online from www.twcoulsdon.org.uk



THE CHANGELING



The Changeling is widely regarded as one of the best plays of the Jacobean era - a darkly comic masterpiece by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley. It's a violent, gothic tale, that manages to be both funny and horrific in two parallel plots.

In one, Beatrice-Joanna - spoilt, rich, beautiful - is blinded by desire for Alsemero, but betrothed to Piracquo. To rid herself of her unwanted fiancé, she enlists the hated Deflores - a disfigured servant who both repels and fascinates her. But Deflores has a dark purpose of his own, and Beatrice-Joanna little understands the terrible price he will exact.

Meanwhile, in the nearby asylum, a pair of noblemen masquerade as lunatics in a ruse to have their wicked way with the madhouse-keeper's young wife. Each plot holds up a mirror to the other, charting twin courses of love, lust, infatuation and madness.

Who is the changeling of the title? Well on the surface, it's one of the imposters who gets himself into the asylum to try his luck with the madhouse-keeper's wife. But the true changeling is surely Beatrice-Joanna herself, as the play revolves around her inexplicable mutation into a depraved, amoral monster.

In 1622, people in Middleton and Rowley's England would have had no hesitation in putting such a total collapse of character down to witchcraft. Including the substitution of a dutiful and virtuous daughter by an evil surrogate - a changeling.

The playwrights know better of course. They deftly show how just a few fateful steps take an impressionable young mind from the delirium of love, to frantic obsession. But is Beatrice-Joanna deluded, deranged or simply hapless? A spoilt little rich girl, whose dangerous game of dare spirals out of control with hideous consequences? Or a cold, calculating sociopath? Either reading is valid - and so are many others. This central riddle is one reason why The Changeling remains such a compelling thriller, four centuries after it was first performed. What do you think?

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